

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: SET DESIGN OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S
THE TAMING OF THE SHREW
INA AND JACK KAY THEATRE,
DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE,
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND AT COLLEGE PARK

Eve Reina Feinberg, Master of Fine Arts, 2005

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The purpose of this thesis is to document and analyze the process of the scenic design for William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, as it was produced at the University of Maryland's Department of Theatre in March of 2005. The role of a scenic designer as a member of a design and production team is to support the conceptual vision of a stage director. Chapter One of the thesis document presents a script analysis for *The Taming of the Shrew*. Chapter Two reviews the scenic designer's process of visual research as an integral component of the theatrical design process. This research is conducted in collaboration with the stage director, costume and lighting designer. Chapter Three details each step of the execution of the scenic design. Chapter Four completes the thesis with an analysis of the set designer's process. The appendices include the visual research sources used, photographs of the realized setting, as well as all relevant graphical documents created by the scenic designer to facilitate the completion of the set design.

A SCENIC DESIGN FOR WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S
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UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND AT COLLEGE PARK.

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Chapter One: Textual Analysis

In William Shakespeare's play, *The Taming of the Shrew*, first published in the 1623 first folio¹, the character Vincentio, father of Lucentio is disoriented by the seemingly nonsensical logic of the world in which he finds himself and exclaims "But is this true?" (IV.5.70) Vincentio has appeared in the middle of Petruchio's taming of his wife Katherine on their journey to Bianca and Lucentio's wedding. It has been conceded by Katherine that Petruchio will become her new north star and she shall define the world in perfect accord to his changeable mind. Vincentio is subjugated to confusing proclamations that he is at first a youthful, virginal maid, and then a wrinkled and faded man and finally that he is a new family member to these two strangers. Out of confusion, Vincentio halts their speeches by asking the question "But is this true?" (IV.5.70). He is unaware of the context of their game and feels belittled by their entertainment. During this scene, Petruchio and Katherine's words have created a performative fiction wherein they construct mutable realities. Vincentio cannot be certain that the two strangers are telling any facts since ideas and images become true with the speaking of it. Language itself is suspect since it is culpable in creating illusion. During this scene (IV.5) the interplay of Petruchio and Katherine's words invent a theatricalized environment where they are able to create a world with its own rules and its own conventions.

As a set designer, I approached this text, in a similar manner and with confusion about the special world of the play similar to the character Vincentio. The ease and

¹ Stephen Orgel, ed. *The Taming of The Shrew*. (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), xli.

frequency with which the characters create their own histories and fictions in the overtly theatrical reality found in *The Taming of the Shrew* makes play-acting one stable aspect of this world.

Chapter One of my thesis will explore the world of the play from this perspective as I use techniques described by Richard Hornby, in his book *Drama, Metadrama, and Perception* as a means to analyze the play. I consulted Hornby's work because my interest in *The Taming of the Shrew* concerns metadrama. *The Taming of the Shrew* employs a variety of play-within-a-play devices and it is my belief that metatheatricality can be a means through which to gain insight into the text, and this foundation could aid my participation as a meaningful collaborator in the production process.

Before Richard Hornby wrote *Drama, Metadrama, and Perception*, Lionel Abel had begun the discourse by highlighting the importance of a play-within-a-play and naming this dramatic device as a "dramatic form" in his book *Metatheatre*.² Abel writes:

From the same modern view, events, when interesting, will have the quality of having been thought, rather than of having simply occurred. But then the playwright has the obligation to acknowledge in the very structure of his play that it was his imagination which controlled the event from beginning to end. Plays of this kind I have in mind exist. I did not invent them. However, I shall presume to designate them. I call them metaplays, works of metatheatre.³

Abel declares that his new terminology metaplay⁴ is not an act of creation since he cites plays from the sixteenth century (*Hamlet*, *As You Like It*, *A Midsummer Night Dream*,

² Lionel Abel. *Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Form*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1963), 78.

³ Ibid, 61.

⁴ Lionel Abel defines a *metaplay* in his book *Metatheatre* (on page 60), as "a theatre piece about life seen already theatricalized...that the persons appearing on the stage in these plays are there not simply because they were caught by the playwright in dramatic

Twelfth Night) that contained aspects of a play-within-the-play devices.⁵ This metaplay is a method of exposing the process of the playwright within the text and highlighting this authorship as a means for a text to become self-conscious of its boundaries. Abel argues that when a playwright includes a play-within-a-play structure, this inclusion discloses the playwright's intent to reveal the artifice in the fiction in order to illuminate the fact that the text is pure imagination.⁶ To Abel, once this imagination of the dramatist is revealed, fictional characters are perceived as self-conscious of their role and are able then to communicate to an audience that "we are all more profound than our purposes seem to indicate."⁷

Hornby, in *Drama, Metadrama, and Perception*, acknowledges Abel's work and further defines Metadrama as "...drama about drama; it occurs whenever the subject of a play turns out to be, in some sense, drama itself."⁸ Hornby's detailed work lists five possible varieties of metadrama. These include:

1. The play within a play.
2. The ceremony within the play.
3. Role playing within the role.
4. Literary and real-life reference
5. Self reference⁹

These various types of metadrama can be identified throughout Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* and I will, in this chapter, analyze three moments in the text using

postures as a camera might catch them, but because they themselves knew they were dramatic before the playwright took note of them.

⁵ Lionel Abel. *Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Form*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1963), 66.

⁶ Ibid, vii.

⁷ Ibid, 62.

⁸ Richard Hornby. *Drama, Metadrama, and Perception*. (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1986), 31.

⁹ Ibid, 32.

Hornby's categories of metadrama. I will focus on two types of metadrama; the play-within-a-play and the role playing with the role, since these devices are used most consistently and clearly throughout *The Taming of the Shrew*. In my research I investigated J.L. Styan's book *Shakespeare's Stagecraft*, even though I did not find this particular book relevant to my research, it did guide my research towards another of Styan's books, *Restoration Comedy in Performance*. In this book, Styan writes about a different time period in theatre history but his exploration is helpful to develop an understanding of metatheatricality and its conventions. Styan, in his discussion of Farquhar's *Discourse*, identifies the effects of metatheatricality as having "a freedom of time and place...in which the audience was a full partner."¹⁰ Thus, if Shakespeare's play employs metadrama, it can be argued that theatrical imagination trumps location and time period and that attention and preservation of theatricality in *The Taming of the Shrew* should be present in any future staging of the play.

It is not hard to make a case for the importance of the play-within-a-play structure, Hornby's first variety of metadrama, in *The Taming of the Shrew*. The play begins with an Induction, in which Christopher Sly, (a drunken beggar) becomes a target for a lord's elaborate trick. Christopher Sly is taken (while unconscious) from the exterior of an alehouse and placed in the lord's bedroom. He is then told that he is a nobleman who has been suffering from insanity. For the deception, the lord recasts one of his servants to play the role of wife to the newly (if falsely) noble, Christopher Sly. It is during this ruse that a troupe of actors arrives and performs *The Taming of the Shrew*, or as the Page prefaces "...a kind of history." (Ind.2.138)

¹⁰ J.L. Styan. *Restoration Comedy in Performance*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 12.

This meta-theatrical preamble in *The Taming of the Shrew* is far from being an anomaly in Shakespeare's work. For example: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Hamlet*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, *All's Well that Ends Well* all contain similar devices to highlight their own theatricality.¹¹ But, originality is not the gold standard for significance.

Kenneth Muir, in his book *The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays* reviews Shakespeare's 1623 first folio of *The Taming of the Shrew* and identifies possible source material for the Christopher Sly storyline. In Muir's opinion "the Sly Induction is derived ultimately from a story in *The Arabian Nights*."¹² Both narratives, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Arabian Nights*, by Heuterus, offer a tale containing a nobleman's entertainment being culled at the expense of a drunkard. In *The Arabian Nights*, the drunk is an artisan and the nobleman is the Duke of Burgundy.¹³

Shakespeare uses this (possibly borrowed) material to prime the viewer at the onset of the play that a theatrical double vision will occur throughout this piece. The Induction story is not only a play-within-a-play from the Hornby's list of metatheatre, but also the lord's ruse is conveyed as its own theatrical event. Christopher Sly is made to believe the fiction that he is a lord by the use of scenery, costumes and role-playing. Sly's scenery changes from the exterior of the alehouse to the lord's "fairest chamber". (Ind.1.44) His new costume is supplied from the lord's closet and finally the servants are

¹¹ Lionel Abel. *Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Form*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1963), 66.

¹² Kenneth Muir, *The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 19.

¹³ Ibid

instructed to act as if Sly is their master. The lord, in *The Taming of the Shrew*, becomes a dramatist as he schemes:

What think of you, if he were conveyed to bed,
Wrapped in sweet clothes, rings put upon his fingers,
A most delicious attendants near him when he wakes
Would not the beggar then forget himself? (Ind.1.35-39)

Shakespeare has given the lord the common tools that theatre often employs (sets, costumes, and actors) in order to construct an illusion for Christopher Sly and at the same time overtly exposed this theatre making process. As a result, the scene creates a multi-theatricalized event for the audience. Present during this moment is the role playing within the role and a construction of another play-within-a-play within the Induction which functions as the play-within-a-play.

The attendants, especially the male page who becomes recast as Sly's wife are now, as Hornby describes: "a third metadramatic layer to the audience's experience: a character is playing a role, but the character himself is being played by an actor."¹⁴ This role playing, on top of the aforementioned moment of theatrical design all within the context of a play-within-a-play structure can grant in Styan's viewpoint:

The stage another degree of intimacy with those who watch it by having them share the moment-by-moment activity of creating the drama. The author develops a special skill in commenting, slyly, or opening, on his own business as a craftsman, as if he were on the stage himself. The style of writing, of acting and of viewing all undergo a transformation, and what might have been taken to be secondary characteristics of the art of drama begin to command the whole event.¹⁵

¹⁴ Richard Hornby. *Drama, Metadrama, and Perception*. (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1986), 68.

¹⁵ J.L. Styan. *Restoration Comedy in Performance*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 13.

The staging of this self-conscious theatre allows fictional characters in a fictional work the ability to blur the boundaries of the staged world and the real world and communicate on a variety of levels.¹⁶ Thus, the Induction is important in its use of overtly metatheatrical devices and it presents a clue into the dramatic form in which the entire play of *The Taming of the Shrew* operates. It contains the first two varieties of metadrama described by Hornby (a play-within-a-play, and role playing within the role).

Theatricality remains a shadow over the work even after Christopher Sly leaves the drama. In the first scene Lucentio, a young man from Pisa, enters and declares: his birthplace, who his father is, the location of the play, and his overall dedication to seek scholarship in Padua. Within the span of 50 lines both Lucentio and his servant Tranio retreat as new characters enter. When asked by Lucentio the nature of the incoming company, Tranio replies “Master, some show to welcome us to town.” (I.1.47) Lucentio and Tranio shift as the scene progresses from actor to spectator. This shift in roles is similar to the scene previously stage in which Christopher Sly and the page participate as audience members to the visiting acting troupe. At this moment in the play, there is a possibility of three layers of audience membership. If Christopher Sly and the page have not left the stage, they represent one layer of audience. There is the addition of Lucentio and Tranio who, as I have mentioned, shift into the spectator roles. And finally, all this occurs within a theatre production that will be viewed by a ticketed audience. A multiple audience is another device of metatheatricality and one that connects the outer framing play to the inner play in *The Taming of the Shrew*.

¹⁶ Lionel Abel. *Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Form*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1963), 64.

My analysis once again focuses on the scene where Vincentio first encounters Petruchio and Katherine, since it is a valuable moment in the play in which Katherine consciously rejects objective truth and begins to participate in the active creation of illusion.

In the beginning of the scene Kate is in disagreement with Petruchio's over the identity of the celestial body in the sky. She states. "I know it is the sun that shines so bright." (IV.5.5) As the scene progresses Katherine consciously drifts away from her perceived reality (due to Petruchio's insistence) and participates in Petruchio's game of performative reality.

At first, she needs coaching from Hortensio "Say as he says or we shall never go." (IV.5.11) but ultimately it is her own words, without the coaching of Hortensio, that turns the sun into the moon:

Kate: Then God be blessed, it is the blessed sun,
But sun it is not when you say it is not,
And the moon changes even as your mind.
What you will have it named, even that it is,
And so it shall be still for Katherine. (IV.5.18)

It is in this moment in *The Taming of the Shrew* that reality is presented alongside theatricality as a method to navigate through a world and it is theatricality that is chosen.

Abel writes eloquently on this principle,

Shakespeare was the only one possessed by a complete confidence in the power of imagination, not simply in its power to make speeches splendid...but in its power to arrange, order, and judge all manners of persons and every single type of action; in other words, to put the whole world on stage.¹⁷

¹⁷ Ibid, 64.

This idea at first seems ironic, that a self-conscious theatricality could prove to be a superior method to communicate what is real on stage. But, Shakespeare also hints at this irony during Petruchio's and Katherine's disagreement about the sun. The audience is lead to believe that Petruchio mislabels the sun as the moon and then demands Katherine to agree with him in an effort to tame her. But, more can be extrapolated from this moment. Katherine reorganizes her sensibilities to match Petruchio's but, "the worlds a stage" at this moment. There is always the possibility that there is no true sun present at this time during the play, especially in England where sunshine does not occur frequently. I researched early seventeenth century English stages in which Shakespeare's first folio began its stage history. Tori Haring-Smith, in the book *From Farce to Metadrama: A Stage History of The Taming of the Shrew, 1594-1983* , cites Newington Butts, the Globe, and Blackfriars as venues in which *The Taming of the Shrew* was played. The architecture varied between these sites creating (depending upon where you viewed the play) either an indoor or outdoor theatrical event. This scene had the possibility of being stage without the true sun.¹⁸ If this is the case or if the scene uses a prop (or painted) sun to represent the sun, than Katherine and Petruchio are arguing in a world where there are no natural truths present. Therefore, Katherine's reorganization of the world according to Petruchio's mind is of no real consequence, since the their reality is all artifice, theatre, and play-acting.

By the end of the play, a huge shift in the use of metatheatricality has occurred, from obvious to subtle. The inclusion of the Induction can be cited as an example when the metadrama is not only present but is particularly revealing itself. The text is set apart

¹⁸ Tori Haring-Smith *From Farce to Metadrama: A Stage History of The Taming of the Shrew, 1594-1983*. (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1985), 8.

to highlight this dramatic form. In contrast, by Kate's final scene, metatheatricality has become more sophisticatedly woven into the text. Kate's last moments, in my opinion, can be seen as a performance.

The scene begins with a feast in honor of Lucentio and Bianca's wedding. This plot device can be categorized as a ceremony within the play, which is part of the variety of metatheatricality listed by Hornby. Thus, the metadrama is already present even before Kate speaks. During the festivities the married women exit and a bet is wagered amongst their husbands to determine which wife is the most obedient. Each man sends a messenger to fetch his mate but only Katherine returns when commanded out of the possible three wives present. Katherine during this scene is playing the role of an obedient wife.

Petruchio initiates the theatrics by summoning Katherine to rejoin the wedding dinner. Katherine is then told by Petruchio to exit and bring the other two wives back. She completes her task and is instructed (again) by Petruchio to "tell these headstrong women/What duty they do owe their lords and husbands." (V.2136-137) It is after the prompting of her husband that Katherine scolds the women, as well as all women, on the nature of disobedience to their lords and urges them to adjust their temperament from "graceless traitor" (V.2.166) to "true obedience". (V.2159)

If Katherine is the play-actor then Petruchio is now the dramatist. Previously in this play, during the Induction, the lord had played this role. Both men direct the actions of others and the staging of these prescribed roles becomes the drama in which we (as the audience) watch. Petruchio's language contains the direction for the scene when he

instructs, “Katherine, I charge thee, tell these headstrong women”(V.2.136) and “Come on, I say, and first begin with her.”(V.2.138) Katherine complies and performs his will.

It is in J. L. Styan’s discussion on Farquar’s *The Beaux’ Stratagem*, where Styan comments on the effects of metatheatre on the audience. To him “the audience is to perceive that the stratagem is highly ambiguous” because everyone from the actors, to the audience members are aware of the performance taking place.¹⁹ I reference Styan again because his explanation of theatricality references audience’s suspicions of the theatre and a possible double meaning within the text. I believe within this explanation, it is easier to imply a double meaning in Katherine’s final speech and Shakespeare’s use of meta-theatricality.

Many other scenes in *The Taming of the Shrew* can be analyzed in the same manner as I have done in this chapter. My intent was to reference enough of the play to gain sufficient evidence of presence and importance of the metaplay in *The Taming of the Shrew*. Happily, my research coincided with the stage director’s concept for our production of *The Taming of the Shrew*. Therefore, my analysis for this chapter gave me a strong understanding into the text and became a wellspring for my design ideas.

¹⁹J.L. Styan. *Restoration Comedy in Performance*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 234.

Chapter 2: Design Process and Visual Research

The text analysis represented the only phase of the scenic design process that was solitary. The development of my set design, from the stage director's concept to opening night, depended on the collaborative efforts of others. The Taming of the Shrew's creative team consisted of the stage director Dr. Heather Nathans, lighting designer Mr. Andrew Guban, costume designer Ms. Yvette Ryan, and myself as scenic designer. The faculty advisors for this production were Professor Daniel Conway, Professor Harold Burgess, and visiting artist Kathleen Geldard.

Initial Meeting

I attended the first meeting of the University of Maryland's production for The Taming of the Shrew, wherein the stage director, Dr. Heather Nathans, described her vision for the piece. Our production of Shakespeare's comedy would be designed, directed, and presented to the audience as a "rehearsal." Dr. Nathans specified the visual world for our production by showing the creative team a William Hogarth engraving entitled "Strolling Actresses Dressing in a Barn"(figure 1). Dr. Nathan's wanted the designers to draw inspiration from the world of the eighteenth century strolling players as presented in Hogarth's work. The setting in the engraving is of an eighteenth century barn, and this was to be the location for our production of *The Taming of the Shrew*.

Dr. Nathans concept for staging the play as a rehearsal combined with Hogarth's image of "Strolling Actresses Dressing in a Barn" preserved and possibly highlighted Shakespeare's use of meta-theatricality in our stage production.

Understanding Hogarth's etching was vital to the design process. In his collection of Hogarth's engravings, editor Sean Shesgreen wrote that Hogarth, "not only felt the pulse of the his age, he quickened it. For this reason his work is of critical importance to students of the eighteenth century."²⁰ Shesgreen commented in his book that the etching Dr. Nathan presented could be seen as

a witty play on the comic incongruity between the dignity, grandeur and mythic dimensions of the roles, costumes and symbols of classical culture and the earthy, vexed and common nature of the real lives of the players who are now the guardians and transmitters of this past.²¹

The tension between the grand and the common resolved itself into a cohesive humor in the etching and this juxtaposition was a detail I wanted to retain in the stage design.

In addition to researching Hogarth, I investigated pictures of eighteenth century playhouses. The etching by Joseph Wright entitled "A Country Theatre"²² (figure 2) was of particular interest to me due to the curvilinear line quality in the artwork. The composition of the etching overflows with the soft bodies of loosely rendered patrons, actors and stagehands. The theatre structure in this etching resembles barn architecture, but the architecture looks bland in comparison to the people. The theatre structure is comprised of wavy, evenly spaced lines. Ultimately, I liked the sense of abundance in the filled composition from this etching and how it gives the picture a sense of intimacy within the larger theatre space. This intimacy proved necessary for *The Taming of the Shrew*, since the majority of the play is comprised of two or three people scenes.

²⁰ Sean Shesgreen, ed., *Engraving by Hogarth*. (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1973), xxiv.

²¹ Ibid, plate 46.

²² Reprint from Brooks McNamara. *The American Playhouse in the Eighteenth Century*. (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), 14.

“The Winterslow House Theatre”²³ (figure 3) was an image that at first I was interested in due to its historical relevancy to our production concept. But, this barn playhouse did not inspire me. The line quality in the picture was horizontal, and there was no texture to be identified. Overall there was a serious tone to the image due to its dark color palette. “The Winterslow House Theatre”²⁴ did not contain visual ideas for a comedic version of *The Taming of the Shrew*.

However, there were three images of barns, from the book *Silent Spaces*²⁵ that did capture my attention due to their support beams (figures 4, 5, and 6). The beams in these barn photographs are structurally credible while being visually captivating. One intriguing aspect of the support beams is that they lead the viewer’s focus around the entire image. Support beams could be used in my design to create focus in a similar manner expressed in these photos.

The historical playhouse research was not the only investigation into the visual world of this play, as the written record became a substantial source of inspiration. In McNamara’s book *The American Playhouse in the Eighteenth Century*, the author described an early playhouse of modest means:

the comparative luxury of a curtain was provided, and there was a token attempt to drape the proscenium arch in imitation of more elaborately decorated playhouses. Indeed, the theater booth in which the conjurer displays his tricks even boasts a motto of some sort painted on a panel above the stage, and both playhouses contain simplified versions of the great chandeliers that lighted the aprons of proper theatres.²⁶

²³ Ibid, 22.

²⁴ Ibid, 22.

²⁵ Malcolm Kirk. *Silent Spaces*. (Boston: Bulfinch Press, 1994)

²⁶ Brooks McNamara. *The American Playhouse in the Eighteenth Century*. (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), 20.

The idea of the actors decorating their space in an attempt to replicate a grander establishment seemed in this early stage of design a possible inspiration for the properties. I was interested in exploring this convention since it might help communicate the concept of metatheatricality found in both the stage director's concept and the text itself.

Synthesizing Visual Research

Researching Hogarth's work convinced me that this artist had more to offer than just visual artifacts. In his various and prolific works I was able to identify a specific line quality, space idea, texture concept, and composition that matched the comedic tone in *The Taming of the Shrew*. My first design element to synthesize and define was space.

In identifying and discovering the scale of the human figure to the architecture of the time period, I could innately translate this time period's sensibilities. Linking space, the empty inert, neutral space of the stage to a dramatic space that is right for this production, was a challenge. There was a great difference from the drawings and pictures of cavernous barns (figures 4, 5, and 6) to the frenzied and tightly packed images of William Hogarth. Ultimately, I decided to capture the sense of proportions found within Hogarth's "Strolling Actresses Dressing in a Barn" and translate that intimate and crowded composition into the Kay's twenty-eight foot by thirty foot proscenium stage. I felt these proportions suited *The Taming of the Shrew*'s dramatic structure as most of the scenes are moments between two or three characters, and a vast space contradicts the intimate staging needs found in the text. Confined composition can support physical intimacies just by the limitation of space, thus making wooing scenes more potent.

After identifying the sense of space I wanted to emulate, I turned my attention to balance. Lynn Pecktal, in his book, *Designing and Painting for the Theatre*, defines the idea of balance within the stage picture as “the visual weight on each side of the center line of the stage.”²⁷ Balance and composition is a composite element. It is determined by the interaction of all design elements: space, color, texture and line. An asymmetrical composition is often related to movement and action and endows a stage picture with a visual tension.²⁸

The costume concept would blend an eighteenth century silhouette with a more modern look. Dr. Nathans wanted to incorporate the pronounced asymmetrical sensibilities of British fashion designer Vivienne Westwood as the source for this modern look. In McDermott’s book entitled *Vivienne Westwood*, the editor identifies the fashion designer’s affinity for an unbalanced garment in his review of her 1983 collection:(figure 7 and 8)

Westwood has always favoured clothes that pull and slightly fall away from the wearer to adjust the shape. Her 1983-4 Witches collection was part of this development to give clothes a kind of automatic feel of movement: garments were cut into rectangles and gussets to give a 3-D shape, proportions were altered by cutting the top much higher than the waist, giving the feeling that different parts of the body could move in different ways.²⁹

The costume concept also incorporated the play-within-a-play structure of *The Taming of the Shrew*. Play-acting (in our production) would be denoted when an actor would add an asymmetrical eighteenth century costume piece over the symmetrical eighteenth century base look. Since both the play and the stage director’s concept utilized

²⁷ Lynn Pecktal. *Designing and Painting for the Theatre*. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975),31.

²⁸ Ibid, 32.

²⁹ McDermott, Catherine. *Vivienne Westwood*. (Dubai: Carlton Book, 1999), 15-16.

theatricality, I, as the set designer, would also exploit asymmetry (like the costumes) in order to unify the two design areas.

After identifying the composition for the production, I began analyzing and questioning what line quality would be suitable for our production of *The Taming of the Shrew*. Line quality, described by Lynn Pecktal can, in his opinion, potentially provide a “strong emotional association in a composition.”³⁰ The genre of comedy (broad as it is) does have a corresponding line quality. Lynn Pecktal is didactic in his equation of line quality to mood quality. He considers “curved lines (arches, drapery swags) as the line characteristic we associate with “frivolity”.”³¹

This concept was made apparent when I was researching barn architecture. There is nothing humorous about a barn because of its lack of curved lines. Dr. Nathans noted, that in Hogarth’s composition for “*Strolling Actresses Dressing in a Barn*” there is not a single ninety-degree angle to be found. The discovery of this compositional feature led us both, the director and I, to a shared vocabulary in which the word “billowing” was often repeated. In an instant, the Hogarth source image was distilled from an “iconoclastic print”³² to a rectangular frame littered with curves. The viewer is treated to this curved spectacle with the inclusion and depiction of: fabric drapery, wind machinery, worn wood, drums, swirls of garland, eagle wings, a royal crown, mugs of ale, horns, female forms, and more. Even the tiny stream of monkey urine is rendered with a distinct arc. Hogarth deliberately marked his work with curvilinear elements. Shakespeare’s

³⁰ Lynn Pecktal. *Designing and Painting for the Theatre*. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975),15.

³¹ Ibid, 16.

³² Sean Shesgreen, ed., *Engraving by Hogarth*. (New York: Dover Publications, Inc.,1973), plate 46.

play, *The Taming of the Shrew*, is a comedy and including curved lines became a logical choice for my design.

After line I thought about texture. In Dr. Nathans' concept meeting she specifically addressed this element of design. For her, this production was to be dirty without the dirt. Dr. Nathans was attracted to the way Hogarth captured the genuine sense of his subject matter in his use of cross-hatching. This drawing uses line to create texture in shadows, volume and contrast in a controlled and mannered style. Cross-hatching is dependent on line direction, tone value and density. This technique is able to illustrate an object's attributes with accuracy while withholding particular specifics that often target and communicate on a more graphic and visceral level. Hogarth's "Strolling Actress Dressing in a Barn" communicates a barn atmosphere without the dirt, without any indication of smell, or climate, or variation of texture. Cross-hatching is able visually to elevate a moment to a romantic ideal. When Dr. Nathans talked about cross-hatching, she was communicating about this production's style. The texture needed to match the style of cross-hatching. I chose to use clay since lines could be couched into this material to resemble the similar cross-hatching found in "Strolling Actresses Dressing in a Barn."

The challenge of identifying a texture became more molehill than mountain, because of our color palette. In Dr. Nathans initial concept meeting, she explained to the design team that she wanted the whole show to be done in a cream color palette. Both costumes and set (it was explained) would consider this light cream palette as a unifying element. An entire cream world would instantly make a bold statement, and this light and monochrome palette would potentially have enough visual impact to automatically lean

the set towards a comedic environment. Thus, the color idea allowed me a bit more freedom when considering texture, some diversity in line, and scale. After the first reading of the play, I intended for the play's environment to crackle with rhythm and energy to compliment the nature of conflict found in the pages, as well as, support the humor. The design team's goal was to wrap this eighteenth century world in a beautiful, light palette; this in effect eased my concern and gave my fellow designers and I a single common foundation.

Design Process

After meeting with the director, I felt prepared to unify concept, imagery and emotion into a realized set design.

I first started with thumbnail sketches, which, for a set designer, are small drawings that act as a point of entry from research to design. They are tools of communication and experimentation to express sense of scale, composition and idea. My thumbnail sketches for *The Taming of the Shrew* were quick and horribly rough. I believed none of them had merit. They lacked everything: emotional content, intellectual idea and personality. The elements of design that I had identified earlier in my processes (i.e. curved lines, light color palette, tight spaces and asymmetry) were not in harmony. Regardless, deadlines were approaching. I took one of the sketches to both my advisor and the director to get feedback. My reasoning for this was if nothing productive was being born onto the paper by my solitary efforts to translate the research, then I ought to broaden the dialogue. Numerous classroom experiences have taught me that I can turn a bad sketch into the beginning of a good conversation that can possibly lead to a fruitful idea.

The responses I received from Dr. Nathans and Professor Conway to my sketch were helpful and aided in the evolution of my design. Dr. Nathans was attracted to the different level playing areas in my sketch. She made her needs clear that for her, a primary goal for the set design would be the construction of different levels because she intended on directing the entirety of the play with all the actors on stage. She wanted the different playing spaces as a tool to organize her stage pictures and create focus. From my discussions with Dr. Nathans, it was communicated that if I included different levels and provide the stage space with many hiding areas for the actors to be on stage without capturing the focus of a scene, then she could successfully stage the production. She wanted to denote different locations throughout the play by arranging a variety of stage compositions with benches or sawhorses. Actors in a rehearsal use whatever is available to help aid in their staging, regardless of an object's original context. It is this combination of necessity and imagination that the director wanted to retain for the authenticity of expressing the rehearsal atmosphere.

After the meeting with Dr. Nathans, Professor Conway convinced me that my role was not only to fulfill the director's idea, but also to contribute to the entire concept of this production including (in some manner) my own reactions, responses and aesthetic. Professor Conway voiced that my initial sketch work lacked personality.

I still felt stymied in my design process until I started working in a 1/4" model form. A model is an exact three-dimensional replication of a set within the theatre structure reduced in scale. The professional standard (today) for a model's scale is 1/4"=1'. "The scenic model is a tool to understand the sculptural qualities of the set in

the theatre space and its relation to a human”.³³ There was a huge shift from my previous thumbnail sketch work (that were mostly stiff literal translation of barn/theatre research) to an explosion and celebration of some particular elements. I focused on barn support beams because they were stunning in their use of line.

I started to create a feeling of destruction by intertwining many straight beams. The reconciliation of many converging lines created a dynamism and visual movement within the stage picture. My design started to emerge from this jumbled mesh of beams.

I haphazardly placed a model chandelier unit within the beam destruction. This unconscious placement resulted in an image that harkened back to my historical research, which cited actors decorating a space in an effort to recreate more luxurious theatre spaces. This interaction between properties and barn architecture could also serve as a visual reference to the theatrical life of the strolling players. Though the intellectual affinity between the dead bard and the living artist has ranged over much of western thought, it is in Shakespeare’s attention to theatricality in *The Taming of the Shrew* that I was to find a wellspring for my design. After this moment of accident and discovery occurred, the world for the production was defined.

When I started my model exploration I set aside my research in attempt to separate my vision from my research as I was getting trapped within its specifics. It was with complete irony that I learned in this process that I had to set aside my research to genuinely process it. It reminded me of Ralph Koltai, an award winning European designer who has been credited for “blazing a trail for the growing profession of

³³ Patricia Woodbridge. *Designer Drafting for the Entertainment World*. (Boston: Focal Press, 2000), 5.

scenography.”³⁴ In Tony Davis’s book on stage design, Ralph Koltai sights his talent in recognizing the accident and thus does not begin his work in a sketch because in his experience:

you can not have an accident in drawing so I always work three-dimensionally now. It can happen when I put something in my model or knock something over which breaks, and I’ll think it is much more interesting broken.”³⁵

Once I defined the design idea of the dilapidating barn intermingling with theatrical properties then the rest of the process became a series of decisions. The gestalt became a daily challenge to recognize the right decisions.

Properties

The etching of “Strolling Actresses Dressing in a Barn” is a picture dominated by things. These objects are not empty trinkets, rather, they inform the viewer about the people in the artwork, as well as, contain humor and visual puns. At first I started to search records and uncover the shows that strolling players performed. But, this effort resulted in an unfamiliar list of plays.

I did not think creating a properties life based on objects from obscure plays would be in the spirit of Hogarth. Part of the humor derived in his work was based on familiarity of the viewer to the visual codes. I was reminded of the words of Ming Cho Lee, a professor at Yale University and celebrated scenic artist, about the presumed audience:

I don’t design with a specific audience in mind. I design for my collaborators and ultimately for myself. I have to assume that the audience is as intelligent or as stupid as I am, that is (the audience)

³⁴ Tony Davis. *Stage Design*. (Switzerland: RotoVision Book, 2001), 27.

³⁵ Ibid.

sees things the way I do. It is a form of arrogance to design or direct for an assumed, lowest-common-denominator audience. It implies that we know more than they do and that is inexcusable.”³⁶

I decided our “Strolling Players” were an acting troupe that survived on a repertory of Shakespeare’s plays. Thus, all the props came from my imaginary productions of Shakespearian plays. I found the property research for each article in a variety of Hogarth engravings (figure 16).

Collaboration

The preliminary model for *The Taming of the Shrew* was composed of three decks that all raked 3/4” to one foot from stage right to stage left, as well as, from downstage to upstage. These compound rakes were surrounded by a curved drop on stage right and a flat wall on stage left. In front of the curved drop was a sculpture of intertwined beams. The stage left wall, the curved drop, as well as, the sculpture of beams were all thirty-five feet high.

The lighting designer, Mr. Guban, expressed the need for modification in the set design. His first concern was the overall height of the set. For him, the scenery could not exceed twenty-five feet, or the onstage lighting positions would not be available for his design. I initially wanted the walls to fill the space and vanish into the grid without interruption, but the compromise to lower the height of the set was a necessity. Scenery must coexist with all the design elements and not prohibit another’s work.

After lowering the height of the scenery, Mr. Guban, and the producer, Professor Dan Maclean Wagner, questioned the feasibility of the main raked deck. To them, the

³⁶ Tony Davis. *Stage Design*. (Switzerland: RotoVision Book, 2001), 44.

deck would pose a huge obstacle for hanging and focusing lights. My decision for the inclusion of a deck that was higher upstage and lower downstage was due to aesthetics. The diagonal line created by the raked deck created a visual energy to the design, as well as, thrust the performers closer to the audience.

No one on the production team disagreed with the aesthetic benefits of the raked deck, but the time frame of the lighting hang and focus was minimal. The electric shop did not believe it could successfully hang the lights with a raked deck given the time restrictions in the production calendar. Thus, the decision to eliminate the raked deck came from the production team's commitment to achieving realities.

Collaboration with the costume designer was not about elimination of scenery, but rather about additions to preliminary ideas. Ms. Ryan and I created a single color collage in an effort to express the color unity we both intended for the production. This artwork contained shades of creams, whites and browns. Dr. Nathans introduced the need for color to be added into the costumes. These moments of color were not envisioned to eradicate the cream world, rather, this addition was intended to highlight actors and denote theatricality. The change in costume color demanded a re-evaluation in scenery color if our goal of color unity was to be achieved.

Ms. Ryan and I both agreed to use the painting *Fruit*, by Alphonse Mucha (figure 10), as our new source inspiration. If color was going to denote theatricality in the costuming, then the properties would also use color since they too are items used in a theatrical event. Ms. Ryan was attracted to the sophisticated colors found in Mucha's image. They were deep in tone and varied in shade. The artist's ability to expertly employ the right shade and hue of each of the colors, so that the color variations

remained in harmony with its cream background, was the facet of the painting I wanted our production to emulate. My set would remain in the cream palette and both costumes and properties would have moments of color added to them.

After the design phase is over, the execution phase of the production begins. My new task as the scenic designer was to communicate clearly my design to the scenery, properties, and paint shops.

Chapter 3: Design Execution; Visions and Revisions

In this part of the design phase, I used my model, construction drawings, paint elevations and properties packet to communicate to each artisan working on the production. I converted and partitioned my set design into information for the technical director Mr. Kelly, the properties mistress Ms. Switzer, the stage manager Ms. Chaprinka, and the painter Ms. Chismar. The scene shop tries to preserve and enhance design aesthetic from the paper work to the stage; sometimes this goal is not always achieved.

The first major discrepancy that attracted my concern was the silhouette of my design. The entirety of *The Taming of the Shrew* was deliberately drafted to express an aesthetic of old wooden boards falling apart. The design hinged on both the positive space of the wooden uneven boards and the negative space between the boards. Upon my first inspection of both the stage right wall and upper third deck my frenzied and uneven jagged lines of the boards were gone, as well as the negative space. Instead, both pieces were built as solid units, with a soft ameba-like silhouette; my drafting for this piece, it seemed, had been overlooked.

As the play is comedic, the design used the negative space as a means to infuse lightness in its composition. Mr. Guban and I collaborated on different ways to exploit these negative spaces and over time his lighting ideas converged with the negative spaces found in my design. To lose this quality was to lose too much.

After discussion and adjustment, the scenic artist, Ms. Chismar, took my drafting and with a piece of vine charcoal drew out each individual quirky board on the solid wooden wall unit. The carpenters then used her outline as a guide to inform where to cut and remove pieces of the wall. The result of the scenic artist overseeing the silhouette of the wall proved to be successful. Mr. Guban approved of the second version of the stage right wall and assured me his work could go forward as originally conceived.

Once line quality and shape were resolved, the texture was the next concern. Ms. Chismar provided the production team with a sample of the of the clay floor texture. I had experienced working with this material, but the production team needed to know by means of a four foot by eight foot sample if the clay would resist cracking under the weight of the personnel hydraulic lift that the electric shop would use to hang lighting units. The clay floor fortunately did resist cracking when tested.

Ms. Chismar never produced a wall and board texture sample. Because I had experience working with this desired texture, I did not make it a priority for her to provide a sample from my paint elevations, since I could give her the scenic recipe. The walls and beams were to have a large volume of joint-compound applied to them to simulate the organic disintegration of painted, aged, rough wood. The technical director did not realize how much joint-compound would be used on the floating beams and was alarmed at the amount being applied by Ms. Chismar on the first beam. By Mr. Kelly's calculations the total weight of the floating beams with the original texture would amount to approximately three tons of weight that needed to go above the actor's heads. This was not an option, so the texture recipe needed altering. Ms. Chismar was able to alter the weight of the mixture and still retain the thickness by adding foam peanuts. The foam

was relatively light and suited the scenic needs perfectly without any significant loss of time from the production calendar.

Once the scenery started to be assembled in the Ina and Jack Kay Theatre, Dr. Nathans raised an issue of space and balance. She was concerned about the height of the floating beams in relation to the actors standing beneath the sculptural elements. The beams came to a meeting point above center stage. My intention in designing the beam wall structure was to place the unit above center stage to create lines that would focus the audience's attention down towards the actor. Dr. Nathans agreed with this design element, but she wanted me to understand that focus was not the only effect the sculpture was producing. To her, the space between an actor's head height and the lowest beam needed to be raised since it felt claustrophobic and ominous. It was a priority to Dr. Nathans to change the feel of this location since much of the show had been blocked at center stage.

I was hesitant at first to make a drastic change in scenery until the entire stage picture was constructed. As half of the scenery was not on stage at this time, I could not confidently assess the impact of removing four beams (Dr. Nathan's suggestion) to the overall composition without the entire set in place. The destructed beam wall sculpture was a large element in my design that expressed idea, emotion and aesthetic. I questioned if reduction in its overall scale would take a bold element in my design and marginalize it. I consulted Professor Conway for his advice.

Professor Conway recommended that I make few minor adjustments in order to affect the overall feeling of center stage. It was his suggestion to remove one beam from the sculptural structure, to raise the entire beam sculpture one more foot in the air and

extend the main deck two more feet into the audience. The added deck area allowed Dr. Nathans to move many moments of the play slightly more down stage of the sculpture. This idea and the combined adjustments to the overhead sculpture radically improved the stage picture. The composition had once again shifted towards gaiety while retaining the boldness in the design.

The last design element that needed to be modified before opening night was color. During the design process, Ms. Ryan, Mr. Guban and I had many meetings concerning the color concept of the entire show. Our production was going to use the cream, neutral palette in the set, costumes, and lighting to render the beginning of the play. The cream base would later have elements of color added through costume pieces as a visual code to denote a theatrical costume being added to an actor. It was our goal to highlight the meta-theatricality in our production through the addition of color.

Ms. Ryan and I both chose the same source image *Fruit*, by Alphonse Mucha, because of its overall cream base with muted accents of color. However, when the costumes appeared on stage, an obvious disconnect had occurred. I had anticipated a depth in color, with less saturated hues than the jarring brilliance of Ms. Ryan's fabrics. Her palette on stage became a series of bright jewel tones. The intensity gave the costumes a definite focus, but the interaction between the scenic color and costume colors was in discord. Mr. Guban and I voiced this opinion on three separate occasions and were assured by Ms. Ryan that the color intensity was in process and further distressing to the costume pieces would resolve this issue.

Color denoted theatricality in our version of *The Taming of the Shrew* and was critical to our design concept. I believed the whole design of the show could move

forward if the original neutral palette of the properties was modified and a color wash (taken from colors found in the costumes) was brushed into many of the objects on stage. This addition presented itself in the logic of how the production was using color and following that simple and clear idea the properties should contain some color. The color addition to specific properties was a task that would continue until four hours before opening night. Unfortunately, Ms. Ryan remained unmoved and never modified her color palette.

The first opportunity to look at a completed stage picture was in the final week, the technical and dress rehearsal period, when the work of the set, costume, and lighting designer can be refined in relation to the complete visual world of the play.

Unfortunately, due to snow days, time was lost in the production schedule and the set, properties and paint were not finished. Much of the technical rehearsal process (for me) was devoted to finishing the set design rather than its refinement.

Chapter 4: Production Analysis; from Page to Stage

It was in my first graduate class in scene design at the University of Maryland that Professor Conway handed out a sheet of paper entitled “10 Questions For An Interior Set.” The origin of this material had emerged from the lessons learned and lived when Professor Conway was John Lee Beatty’s assistant in New York City. Arnold Aronson, credits John Lee Beatty, in his book, *American Set Design*, as “a master of lyric or poetic realism, and who, by the age of 32, had established himself as a major Broadway designer.”³⁷ I frequently return to the questions from this classroom handout for self-analysis of my own work. This fundamental checklist of a “good design” asks:

1. Is the environment credible?
2. Does the design reflect a thorough research process?
3. Does the design celebrate the style of the period?
4. Does the design have depth?
5. Is the ground plan effective?
6. Is the color palette unified and tight?
7. Is there an interesting architectural feature?
8. Does the design reflect the character of its occupants?
9. Does the design reflect the emotional tone of the play?
10. How well does the design fit in the space?

As I review my design for University of Maryland’s production of *The Taming of the Shrew* to the above list, I am content in how far I have developed as a scenic designer throughout my studies.

The first question focuses the analysis of the set design based on the idea of faithfulness of style. In our production of *The Taming of the Shrew* inspiration for the world came from an eighteenth century satirist’s illustration.

³⁷ Arnold Aronson. *American Set Design*. (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1985), 3.

The credibility of my design I view as a success when in conjunction with “reflecting a thorough research process.” All of my design decisions were deliberate and stemmed from research. The final design was both new and exciting, as well as, unmistakably Hogarth in style. One member of the English faculty here at the University, to my amazement, recognized the eighteenth century master influence in the scenic design.

The next question asks does the design celebrate the period. I believe it does. I don’t think I can take credit for this celebration, since the fun and frivolity comes from translating the work of Hogarth. William Hogarth’s work is engaging, appealing and time specific. I tried when translating his etching to my scenic design to retain that sense of fun wrapped in an eighteenth century package.

A set designer has to consider the back wall of the theatre space, since audience members are innately aware of the boundaries of the architecture they share with the scenery. Audiences know behind the stage setting there is a back wall. This is one of the factors that pushed a trend in scenery (in contemporary theatre) towards a presentational art form, and that references the audience’s knowledge of the limits of theatre and embraces that shared knowledge.

One of the questions on Professor Conway’s list is focused on the notion of depth (or illusion of depth) on stage. Even though my set is not self-referential in terms with exploiting the “presentational” in its design, I believe it triumphs in creating a stage picture with depth and a set that sits well in the Ina and Jack Kay Theatre. My design achieved an illusion of great depth by the inclusion of a curved drop. The silhouette of the gentle arc in the background of my stage picture grants additional space in the design

between my barn wall destruction and the background. This added air between my elements aided in the illusion of depth. Also, by designing the set to extend up into the air and outward towards the extremities of the theatre space, I was composing a stage picture that filled the stage from end to end and from floor to ceiling.

“A good set masks itself”³⁸, and that was my original intention in the design. But, due to budget limitations, I did have to reduce the overall footage of my set. The end result was having my stage picture interrupted by a black border around the extremes. This was not ideal since the world I created was in a cream palette, but the result did not diminish the impact of my overall design. It did however translate into creating some less than desirable seats in the audience from which to view the play. If I had the option, I would have created velour masking-flats in a darker shade of cream. Masking-flats block the audience’s view of the back wall, lights, and off stage. It is a focusing tool for the set designer and lighting designer. This would have framed the design within a cream box. Unfortunately, there was no money for this idea and it was not a priority for the stage design.

The next question inquires if there was an interesting architectural feature and I believe the destroyed beam structure I designed for this production became that interesting feature. It created a pictorial exclamation mark. Its success was in its ability to illuminate emotions and concepts in the text without creating a visual metaphor that could prove reductive in comparison to the complexities found in Shakespeare’s folio. It is with the spirit of sincerity and depth, not an idea of arrogance and extravagance that I searched to unite form to idea, and history to narrative.

³⁸ Quote from a lecture in Professor Conway’s *Scenic Design I* class, held in the fall of 2003, at the University of Maryland at College Park.

The original ground plan of my design had flaws. The barn stall units were blocking all possibilities of allowing an actor to cross from stage left to right or from stage right to left without having to execute the traffic pattern always downstage of the proscenium. This less than ideal ground plan was modified when the director discovered this inconvenience during the rehearsal process. Dr. Nathans determined that the stall walls should be penetrated to allow actors a cross stage left or stage right upstage of the proscenium.

Also, the space between the down stage staircase unit and the edge of the stage proved to be tight. This was another area in my ground plan that I did not design well and had to modify. In collaboration with the stage director and Professor Conway, the creative team decided to add a two-foot extension to the main deck flooring to widen this valuable area of the stage. I did not see these problems during the design phase even after I had built a model and drafted the ground plan, but, a lesson lived is a lesson learned. After this production, I will retain a heightened awareness to possible ground plan weaknesses.

Communication

The “10 Questions for an Interior Set” are not the only measure of success. The scenic designer works in concert with her fellow designers during the production. This is the crux of a communal art and much of its joy. Therefore the process of collaboration with the costume and lighting designer must be reviewed.

As a design team Mr. Guban, Ms. Ryan and I started our conversations early. The set, costumes, and lights were not acting as three but talking as one. We all agreed on a

unified, tight, neutral palette. But, on opening night there was an obvious discord on stage.

The colors on the costumes never related with the cream color of the stage. It was in the later stages of the technical rehearsal that this split in the design elements became vividly apparent. Ms. Ryan and I based our palette on Mucha's painting *Fruit*, but the translation of his color palette was not successful. Ms. Ryan's choice in fabric colors proved to be problematic. The color value in the costumes was not similar to Mucha's. Ms. Ryan's fabrics were jewel toned while Mucha's colors contained more depth of color. In addition, Mucha's work depended on a balance between muted accents of color in a cream base. Our intentions were to replicate the proportions of color in this image. Unfortunately, Ms. Ryan took the muted accents and made them full costumes with vividly colored fabric choices. This resulted in a heaviness of bold color (the costumes) in a cream base (the set) and thus skewed the proportions. Although I spoke to both the costume and lighting designers about this situation, I believe my failure to prioritize the addition of color to the props is one of the key reasons for this grating unbalance.

Ms. Chismar had taken on the responsibility for applying a color wash from Ms. Ryan's fabric samples to the properties on stage. The task was originally assigned to the properties mistress Ms. Switzer, but she had alerted me she did not have enough time to build all the props, let alone paint them. Thus, when presented with the three options between completing the props, finishing color washes to the stage floor, and applying prop color, I arranged order of importance with the prop color listed least important. This was a mistake.

If my color idea in the properties was fully realized I believe it would have reduced the impact of the two disciplines in color. Mr. Guban did help with the half-finished color issue. After a lengthy discussion, he focused lights on the larger properties. His lighting tools had the gel color of my intended prop color. In this way, the wash of color would be added in a wash of light, not paint.

Mr. Guban and I collaborated on daily basis. His ability to identify the inherent lighting opportunities found in the set and help me exploit them by adding more negative space in my design, adjusting color, and cooperating on heights of scenery, furthered the development of the finished visual world. This collaboration became a source for many positive decisions.

During the execution of the set design, there were problems in communication. The stage right wall, at first, was built as a solid piece without any negative space. This discrepancy was due to the fact that there were two models in the scene shop during the construction. During my design process I had built two models each reflecting a different phase of the design process. While in meetings with Mr. Kelly I had referenced each of the models as a tool to describe the final design. The models were different in scale, one was larger than the other, and only one of the models included a rake deck. Even though, I had developed two models, I created a single packet of construction drawings that included all of my final decision on scale, proportion and space. It was a mistake to have given any of the models to the scene shop since it only led to confusion.

Mr. Kelly based the construction of scenery on my models rather than my construction drawings. This fact resulted in the stage right wall being built wrong. Both the models were too small in scale to accurately reflect the negative space I had intended.

Because of this fact I had spent a large amount of time accurately reflecting the detail of this negative space in my construction drawings. Thus, when Mr. Kelly used my models as a tool to build scenery, details were lost and the stage right wall (at first) was built as a solid piece.

While my models proved to be a tool for miscommunication when they were present in the scene shop, I believe the absence of my final model in the rehearsal room was my mistake. Instead of the final model being present, a photograph of an older model was being used in the rehearsal room. This model did not accurately reflect the final design and should not have been used as an aid. As the set designer, I should have removed this photograph and given stage management the final model. Because I did not, the director had to change blocking when the actors finally got onto the set. This was my mistake. I should have been more active in accurately communicating the set to the director and stage manager. My communication to the director about my design (during the rehearsal process) was not effective. Therefore, in the future, my interaction in the rehearsal room needs to be priority of mine.

The model was not the only tool missing from the rehearsal hall, rehearsal properties also needed to be present. This absence, I believe limited the opportunity for the properties to be an integral aspect to the production. The director and I had conspired in our initial meetings to include practical lighting units for the actor's to move, as well as, saw horses for the actors to use to "build their scene." These articles were built, but I believe they were lost in the process because they were never present in the rehearsal. A lot of the properties never got integrated into the staging, I believe, because the director and the actors did not have enough of an opportunity to work with them. Pamela Howard,

a practicing scenographer and theatre director, records in her book, *What is Scenography*, the set, props and actors always must be present in the rehearsal space for ideas to be born:

The scenographic discoveries were made by the actors themselves working with the actual objects, and conveying a belief to the audience that two small chairs could stand for a whole neighborhood. Two small chairs, four tablecloths and some brave and imaginative actors were all that was needed to paint a picture of a small town, and create a rich theatre out of little means that could be one way forward to rediscovering what drama is actually about, and how actors and artists can make memorable creation together.³⁹

The production calendar for the University of Maryland's *The Taming of the Shrew* was scheduled around the desires of the production facilities. I believe there is a need to insert and elongate the time period for the actors and director to work onstage with all the real props. The visual aspects of the show can then have an opportunity to transform from background into objects that initiate rehearsal discoveries. This interaction is necessary for creative alchemy.

Also, the compressed schedule in the production calendar, limited when I was able to see the final stage picture. It was not until three days before the opening of the production that all the properties were onstage. Because of this absence, I was not able to view my entire design until late in the process. The properties in this show, carried a large amount of my design concept, as well as, created a drastic change in composition. Therefore, the lateness in completing the properties effected my ability to refine the design during the technical rehearsal.

³⁹ Pamela Howard. *What is Scenography*. (London: Routledge, 2002.), 103.

After having my scenic design realized for the University of Maryland's production of *The Taming of the Shrew* I am reminded of a quote from Tennessee Williams, "Plays are never finished they are abandoned." I could have kept revisiting and revising my design further, but the theatre is an art form with an expiration date.

I complete this document in an effort to gain a degree of Master of Fine Arts in theatrical design. But, as I have learned in this process, "master" maybe a misnomer. Each future production will bear lessons, and I am eager to work in a profession where artists are students and learning is ongoing.

Appendix A: Visual Research



Figure 1. *Strolling Actresses Dressing in a Barn*

Reprint from: Sean Shesgreen, ed., *Engravings by Hogarth*.
(New York: Dover, 1980), plate 46.

Appendix A: Visual Research

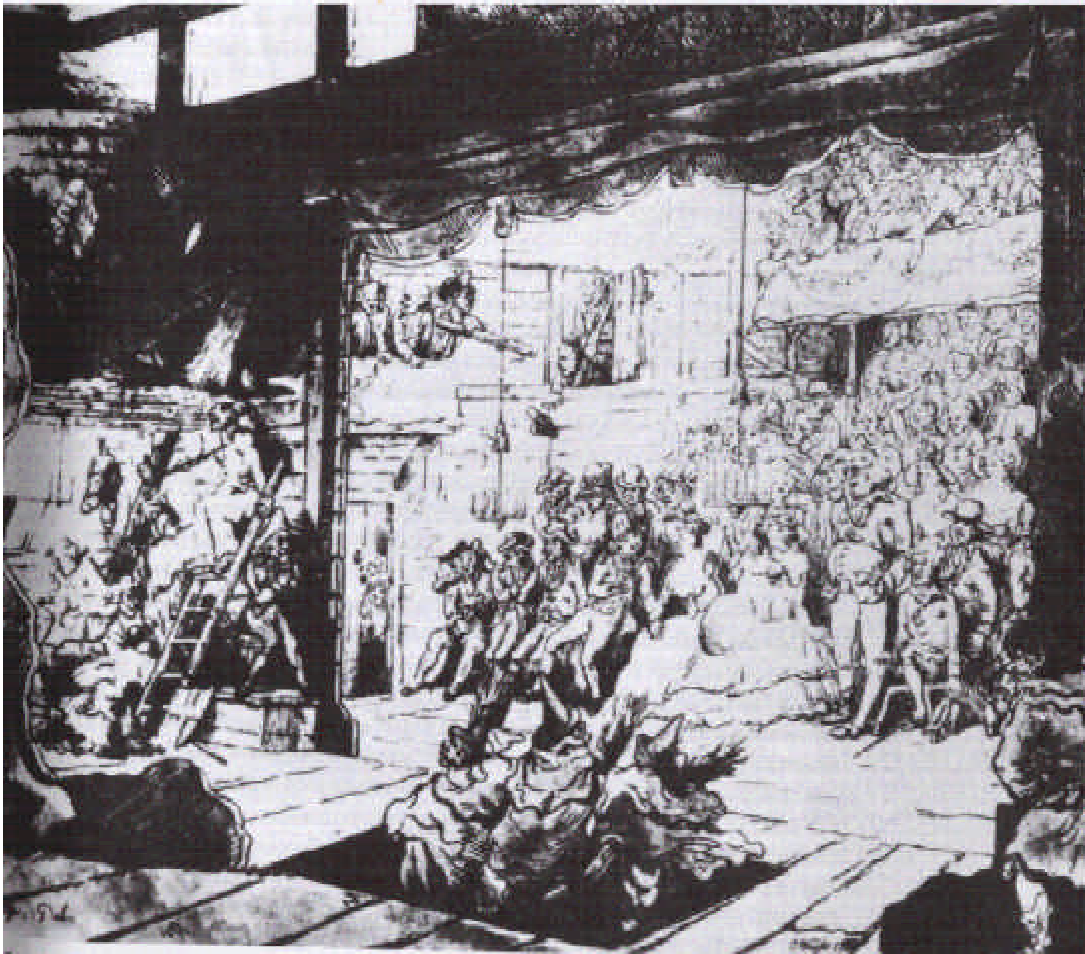


Figure 2. *A Country Theatre*

Reprint from: Brooks McNamara. *The American Playhouse in the Eighteenth Century*.
(Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), 14.

Appendix A: Visual Research



Figure 2. *Winterslow House Theatre*

Reprint from: Brooks McNamara. *The American Playhouse in the Eighteenth Century*.
(Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), 20.

Appendix A: Visual Research



Figures 4-6. *Barn Images*

Reprint from: Malcolm Kirk. *Silent Spaces*.
(Boston: Bulfinch Press, 1994), 66, 82, 95.

Appendix A: Visual Research



Figure 7. *The Erotic Zone Collection*

Reprint from: Catherine McDermott, *Vivienne Westwood*.
(London: Carlton Books Limited, 1999), 54.

Appendix A: Visual Research



Figure 8. *Les Femmes Collection*

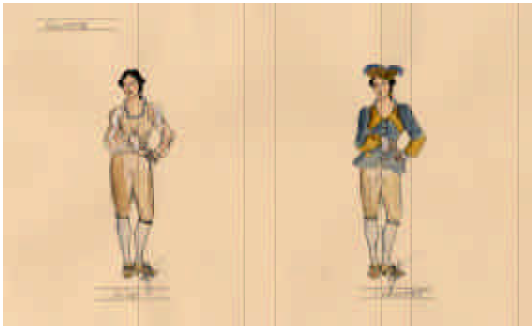
Reprint from: Catherine McDermott., *Vivienne Westwood*.
(London: Carlton Books Limited, 1999), 4.

Appendix A: Visual Research



Figure 9. Yvette Ryan's Final Color Costume Renderings.

Appendix A: Visual Research



Appendix A: Visual Research



Figure 10.

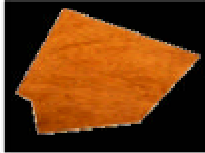

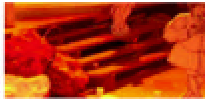


Reprint from: Marta Kadleckova, ed., *Alphonse Mucha*.
(Prague: BB/art, 1992), 7.

Appendix B: Supporting Documents



Figure 11. Preliminary Model Photographs


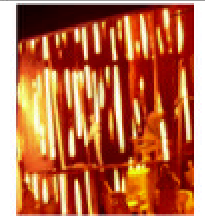
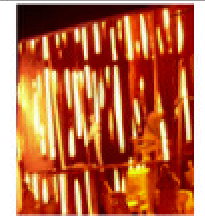


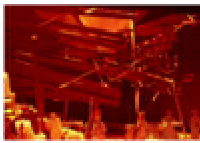
Appendix B: Supporting Documents

| Taming of the Shrew Scenic Reference Chart | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| Scenic Unit | Description | Treatment | Miscellaneous | |
|  | Upper Deck (pictured left) | Raked ¼" per 1' 52' wide x 42' deep | Clay coating with wood grain distressing |  |
| | Lower Deck (pictured right) | Raked ¼" per 1' 24' wide x 10' deep triangle | Same treatment as Upper Deck | |
|  | Deck Steps | 4' wide, 1' tread, 6" rise | Rough wood grain texture | Actors will run down |
|  | Horse Stall w/ posts and "Actor's Deck" | Stall: 16' long 6' tall "Actor's Deck": 22' x 10' | Stall walls: see Barn Wall "Actor's Deck": Rough wood grain texture | 2 attached stair units |
| | Stair units (2) | 6' total height 3' wide, 9" tread, 6" rise | Rough wood grain texture | "off-kilter" – steps skewed as if inexpertly built |
|  | Ladder | Usable to 4' | TBD (must be paintable) | |



Page 1

Figure 12. Construction Unit List

Appendix B: Supporting Documents

| Taming of the Shrew Scenic Reference Chart | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|---|--|---|
| Scenic Unit | Description | Treatment | Miscellaneous | |
|  | Destroyed Wall Intersection | Two individual destroyed plank-walls | Same treatment as Straight Barn Wall | Miscellaneous More planks and chandelier tree suspended between the two sections |
|  | Chandelier Tree | 12' long Practical | TBD | Composed of individual curved sections |
|  | Straight Barn Wall | 34' wide x 32' tall Holes in wall allow light through. | Coated with lightweight joint compound Highly distressed Heavily painted | Can be beat upon by actors |
|  | Curved Rear Surround | 32' tall | Painted, no texture | |
|  | Draped Cloth | Fabric TBD – lightweight, translucent, gauze-like | Not painted |  |

Appendix B: Supporting Documents

| Taming of the Shrew Scenic Reference Chart | | | | |
|---|---|--|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Scenic Unit | Description | Treatment | Miscellaneous | |
|  | Hay Bales (30-40) | Loosely baled hay masks between Upper and Lower Decks Approx 2' x 3' x 1'6" | Fire-proofing TBD | Will be below fire curtain |
| |  | | | |
| Escape Stairs (2) | To offstage | Painted black | | |

Appendix B: Supporting Documents

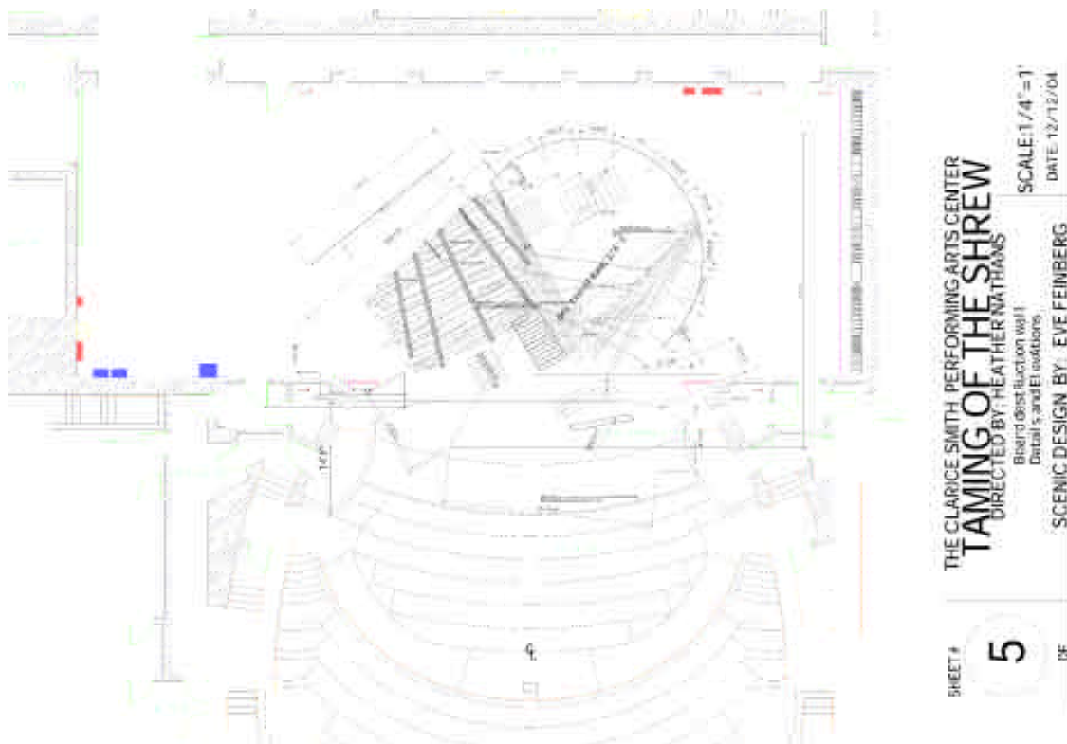
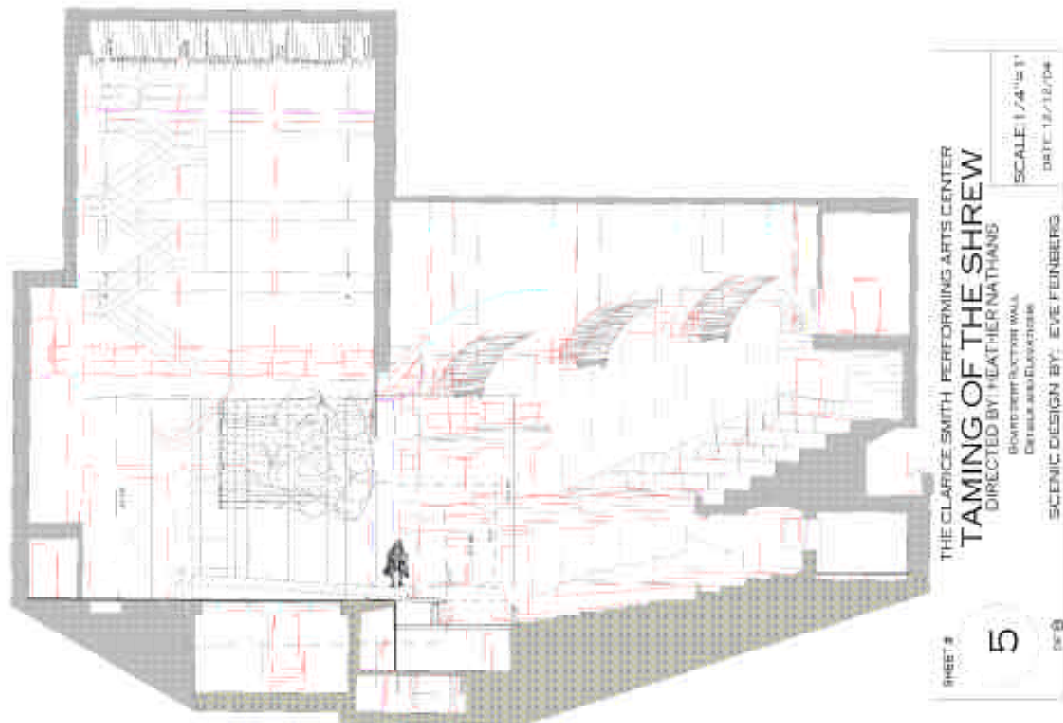


Figure 13. Construction Drawings

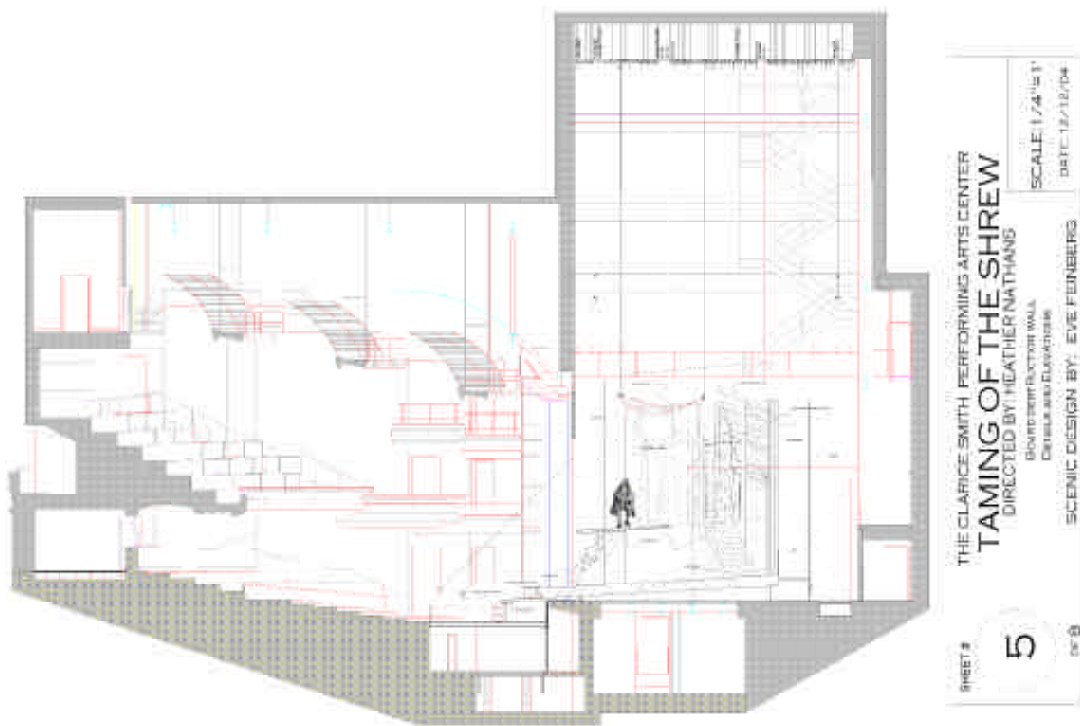
Appendix B: Supporting Documents



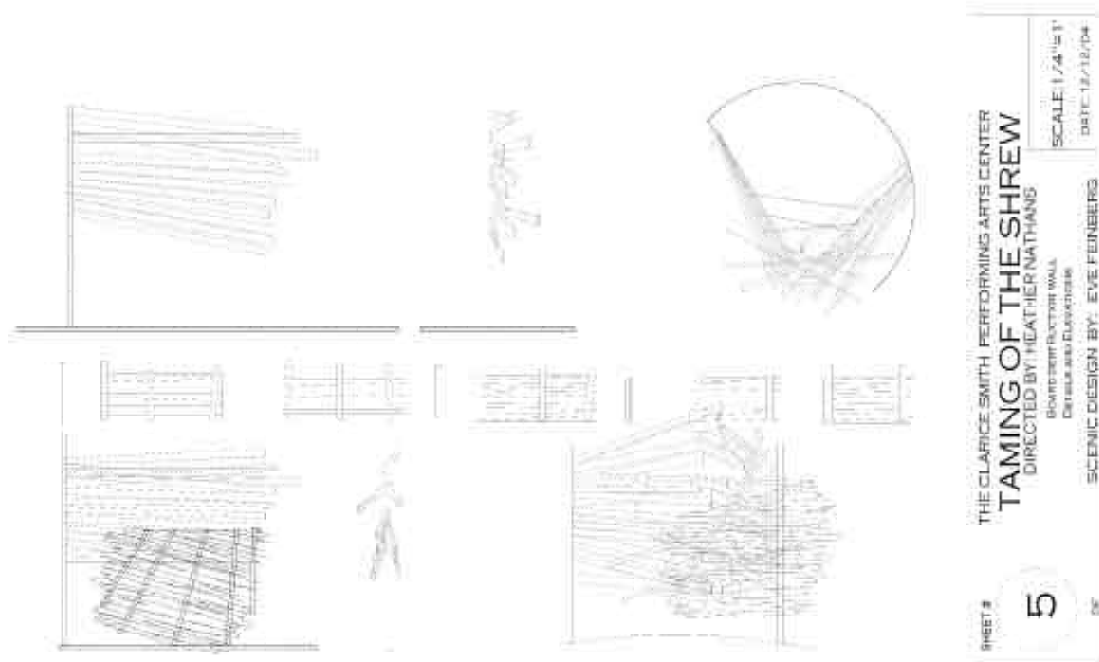
Appendix B: Supporting Documents



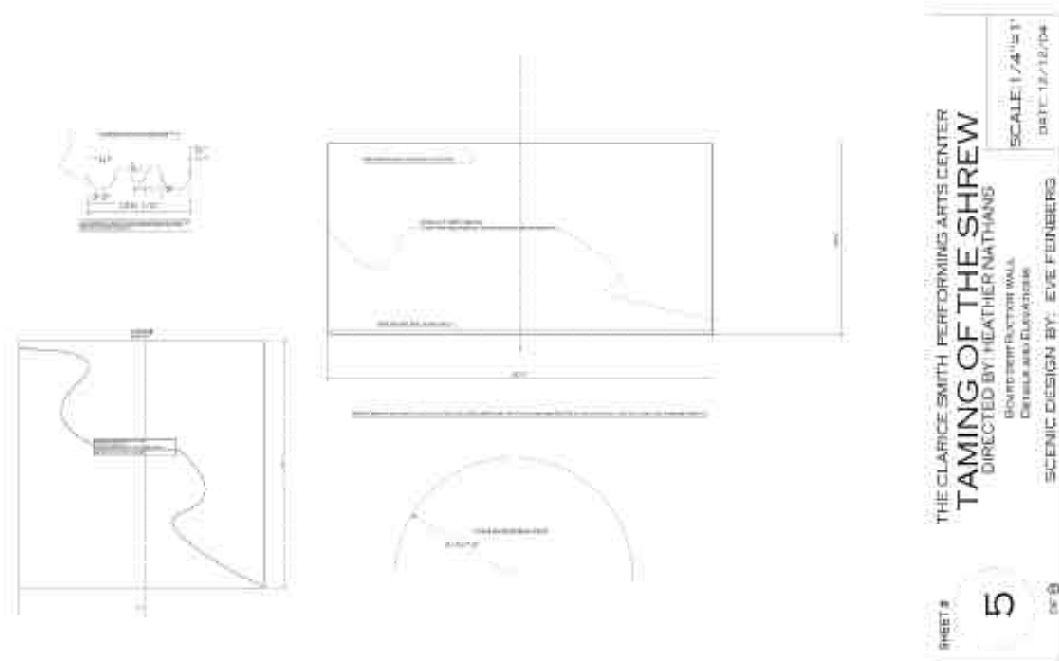
Appendix B: Supporting Documents



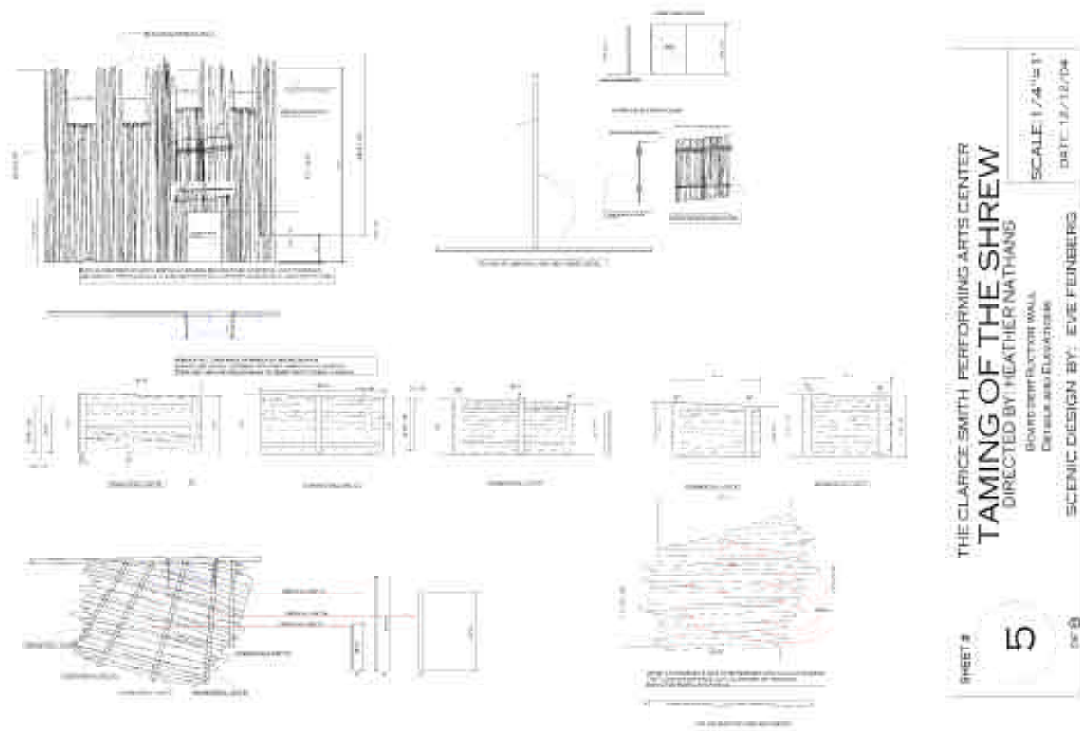
Appendix B: Supporting Documents



Appendix B: Supporting Documents



Appendix B: Supporting Documents



Appendix B: Supporting Documents



Figure 14. Paint Elevations

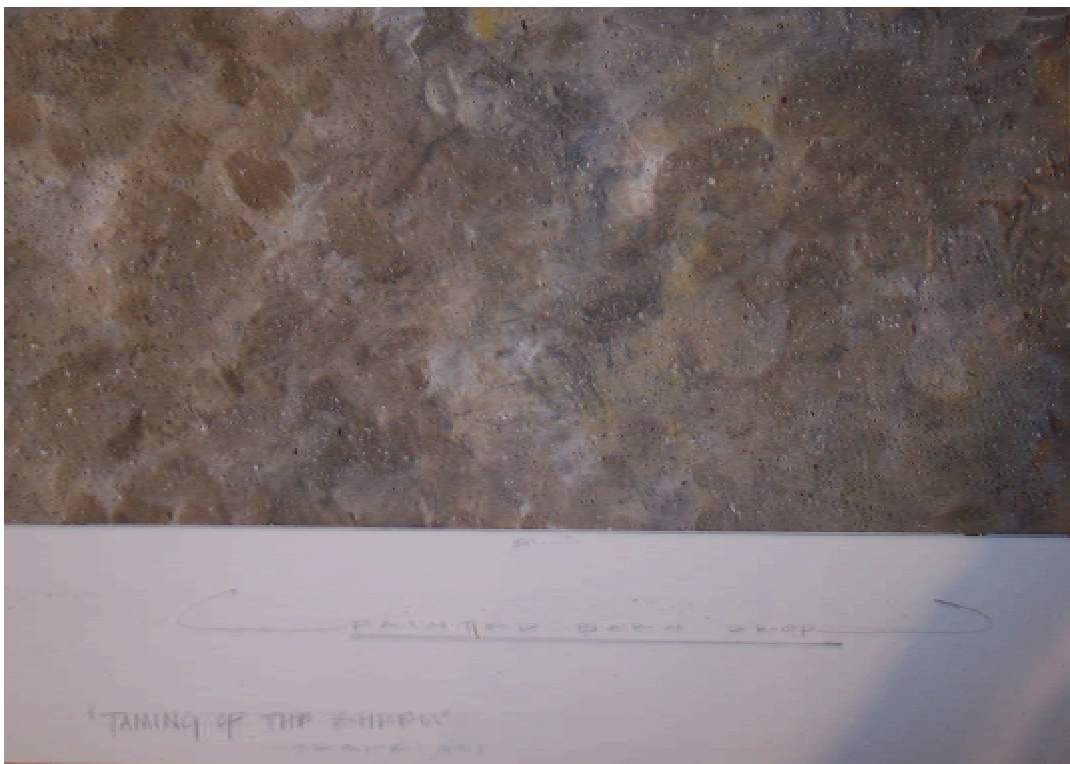
Appendix B: Supporting Documents



Appendix B: Supporting Documents



Appendix B: Supporting Documents



Appendix B: Supporting Documents



Figure 15. Final Color Model

Appendix B: Supporting Documents

| Page | Prop | Quantity |
|------|---------------|----------|
| 3 | Angel Wings | 1 |
| 4 | Banner Stands | 4 |
| 5 | Barrels | 7 |
| 6 | Baskets | 4 |
| 7 | Bed | 1 |
| 8 | Benches | 5 |
| 9 | Boat | 1 |
| 10 | Books | 15 |
| 11 | Bucket | 4 |
| 12 | Bust | 1 |
| 13 | Candle Stands | 4 |
| 14 | Castle Unit | 1 |
| 15 | Chairs | 2 |
| 16 | Butter Churn | 1 |
| 17 | Crown | 1 |
| 18 | Dinnerware | 10 |
| 19 | Drum | 1 |
| 20 | Fake Food | 12 |
| 21 | Grain Sacks | 30 |
| 22 | Guitars | 3 |
| 23 | Hay Bales | 35 |
| 24 | Hoes, Shovels | 14 |

1

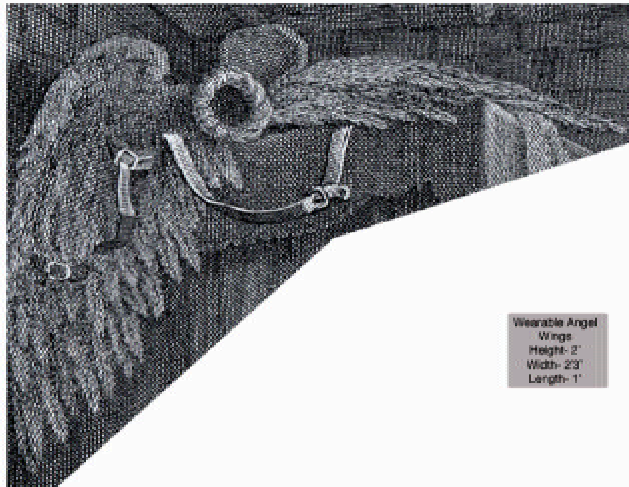
| | | |
|----|-------------------|-----|
| 25 | Ladder | 1 |
| 26 | Lantern | 10 |
| 27 | Lionhead | 1 |
| 28 | Lute | 1 |
| 29 | Lyre | 1 |
| 30 | Moon | 1 |
| 31 | Rope | 7 |
| 32 | Sawhorses | 4 |
| 33 | Skull | 1 |
| 34 | Stocks | 1 |
| 35 | Stools | 6 |
| 36 | Sun | 1 |
| 37 | Swords/Sword rack | 5/1 |
| 38 | Chest/Shield | 1/1 |
| 39 | Trunks | 7 |
| 40 | Wave Machine | 2 |
| 41 | Wheel Barrow | 1 |
| 42 | Whistle | 2 |
| 43 | Wind Man/Clouds | 1/3 |
| 44 | Cloud Man/Clouds | |

***ALL PROPS TO BE PAINTED TO MATCH SET COLOR.

2

Figure 16. Properties Packet

Appendix B: Supporting Documents



3



Banner Stands
Height- 5'
Width- 36"
Build self standing with a
base, build 4



4

Appendix B: Supporting Documents



5

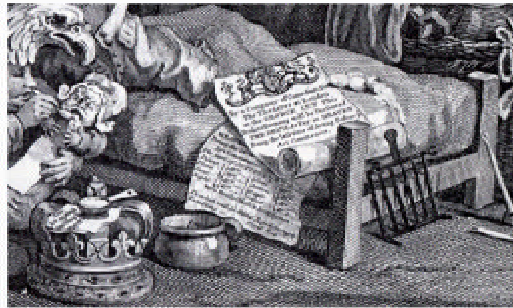


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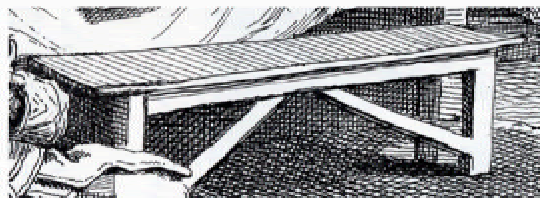
Appendix B: Supporting Documents



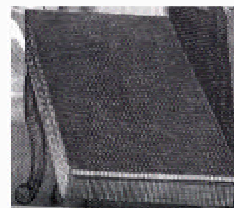
Bed
Height-2'
Width-2'9"
Length-4'9"
Scruffy
bedding on top



7



Bench
Height-1'9"
Length-6'
Width-1'

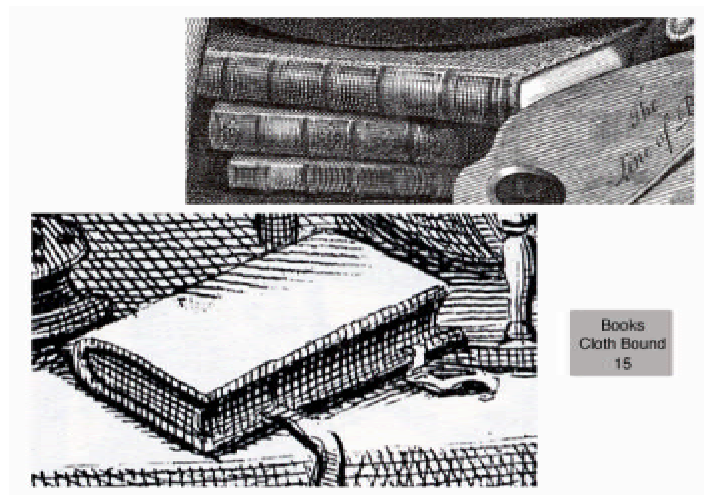


8

Appendix B: Supporting Documents



9

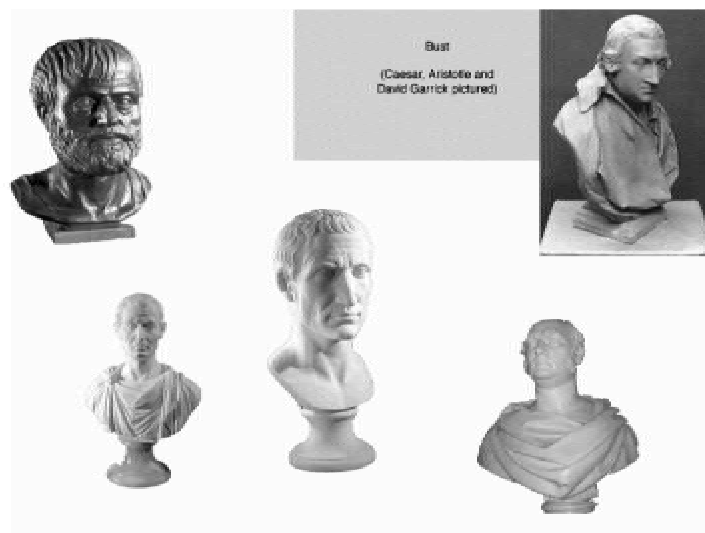


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Appendix B: Supporting Documents

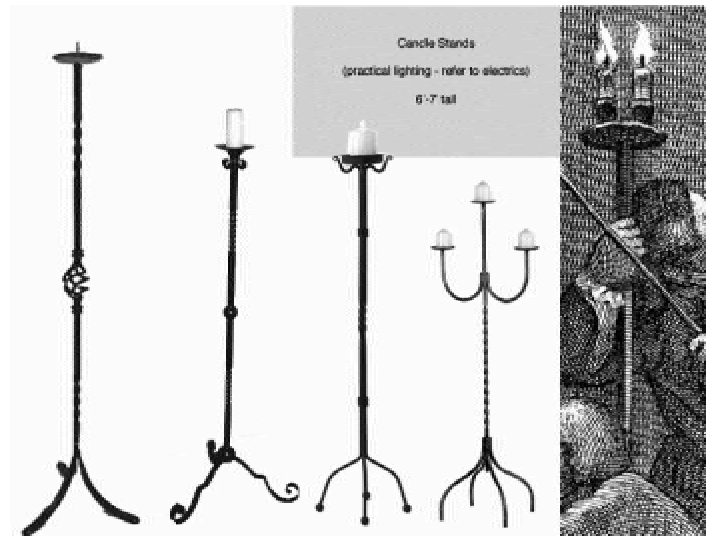


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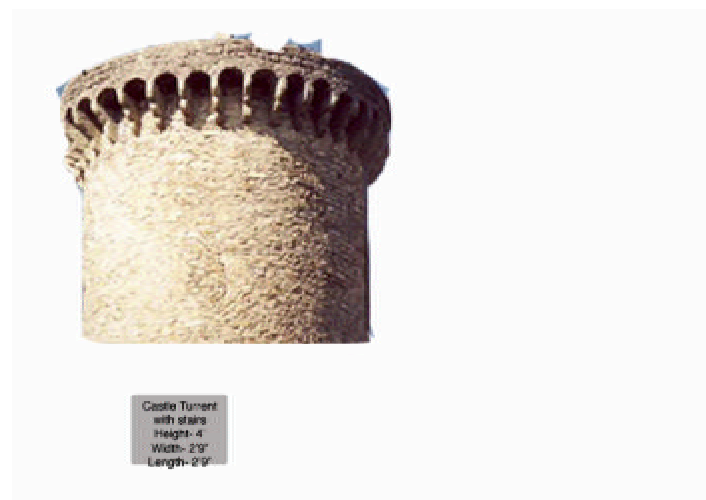


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Appendix B: Supporting Documents



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Appendix B: Supporting Documents

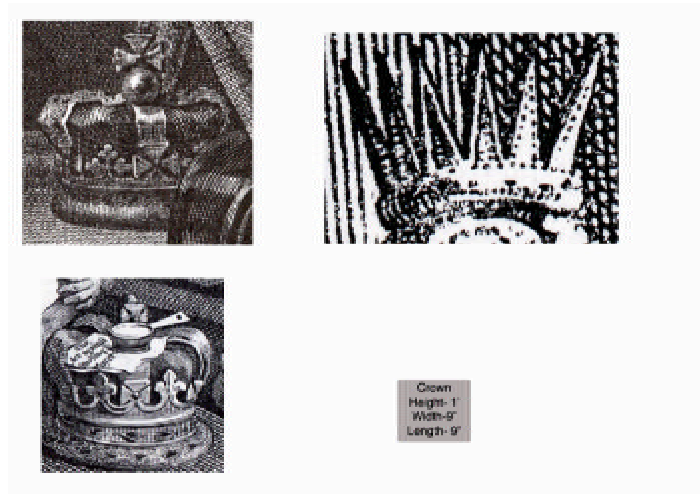


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Appendix B: Supporting Documents



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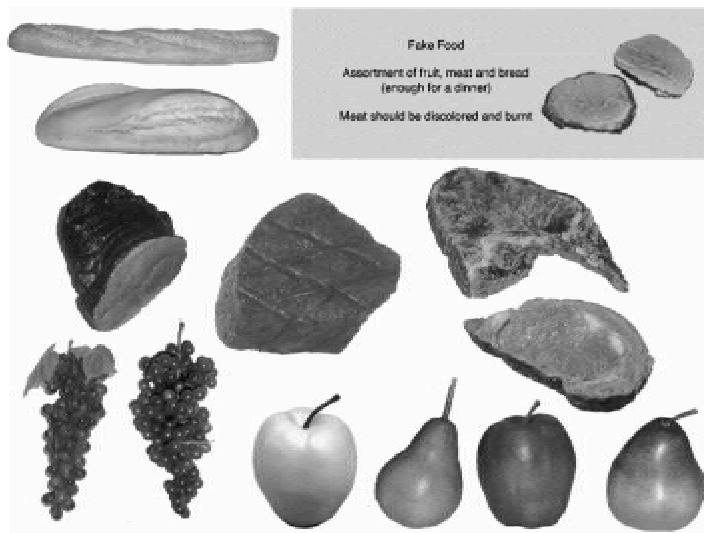


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Appendix B: Supporting Documents



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Appendix B: Supporting Documents



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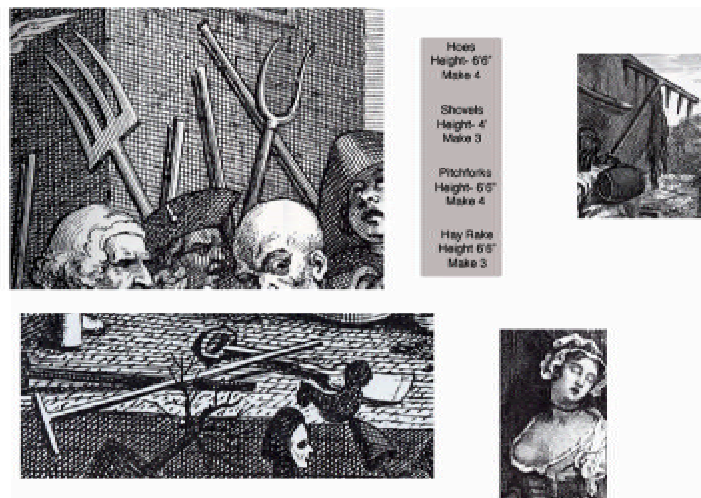


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Appendix B: Supporting Documents



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Appendix B: Supporting Documents



Ladder
Height- 18'
Width- 18"

25



Lantern
Height- 18"
Width- 8"
Length- 4"
Material- 10

Talk to electricians about practicals inside

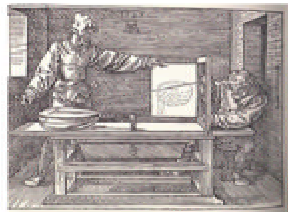
26

Appendix B: Supporting Documents



Lion head statue
Height-4"
Length-2.5"
Width-2"

27

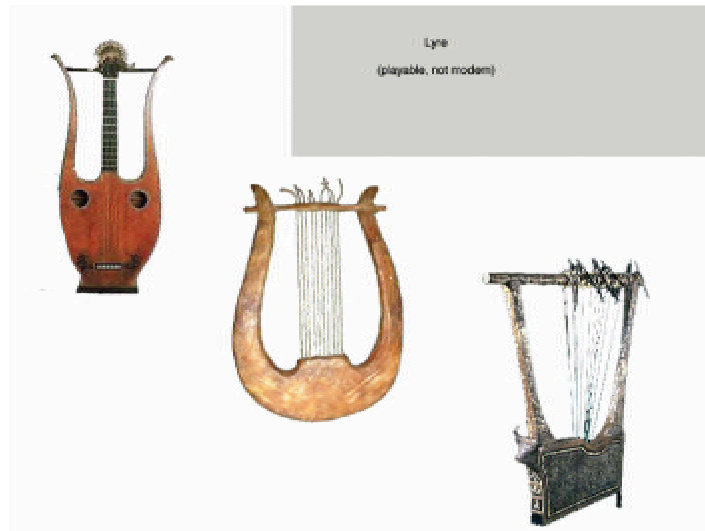


Lute
(playable)



28

Appendix B: Supporting Documents

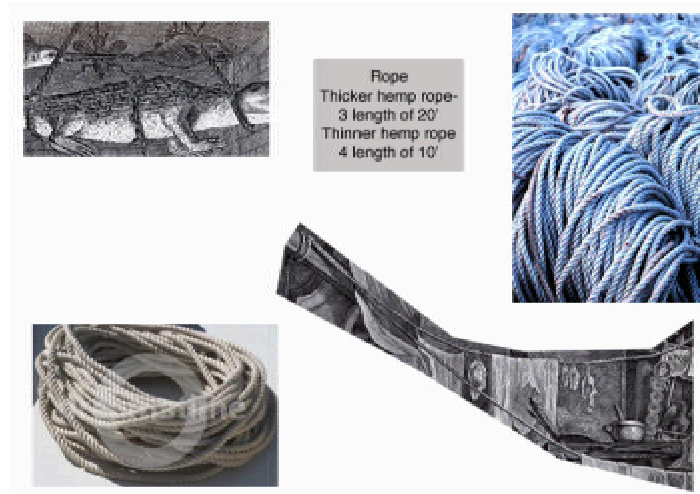


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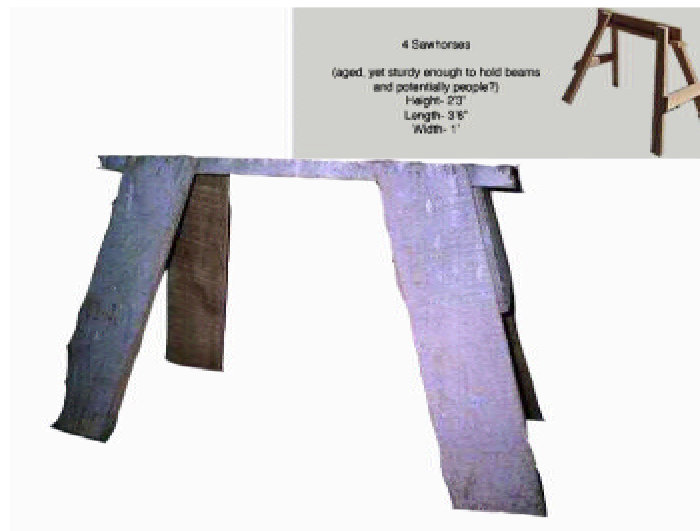


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Appendix B: Supporting Documents



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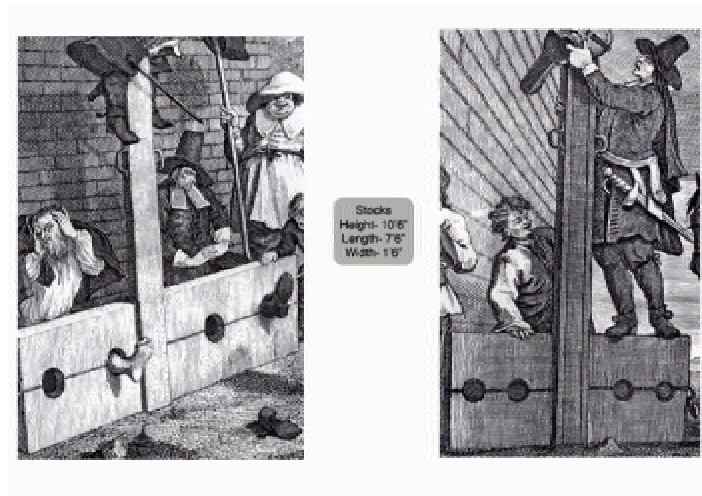


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Appendix B: Supporting Documents

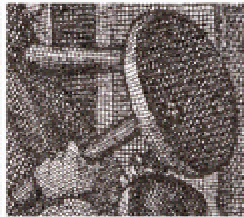
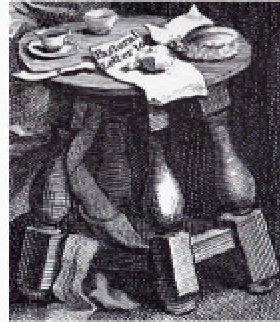
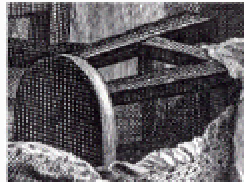


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Appendix B: Supporting Documents



Stools
Height- 1'3"
Width- 1'6"
Length- 1'6"
Make 6

35

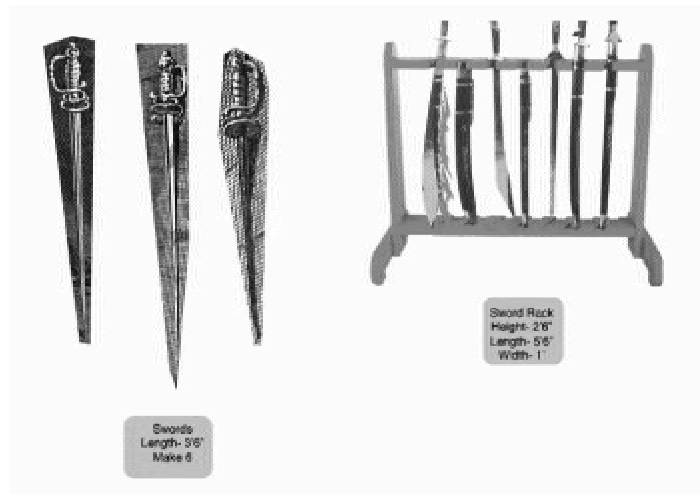


Sun image for disc
(Louis 14)
Height- 3'
Length- 3'
Width- 8"

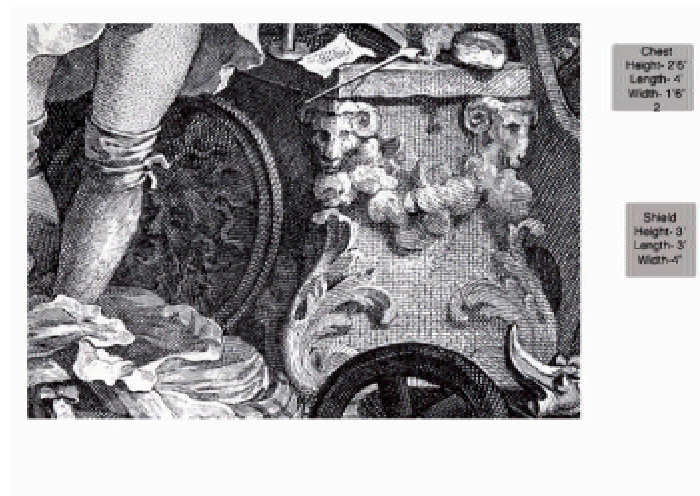


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Appendix B: Supporting Documents

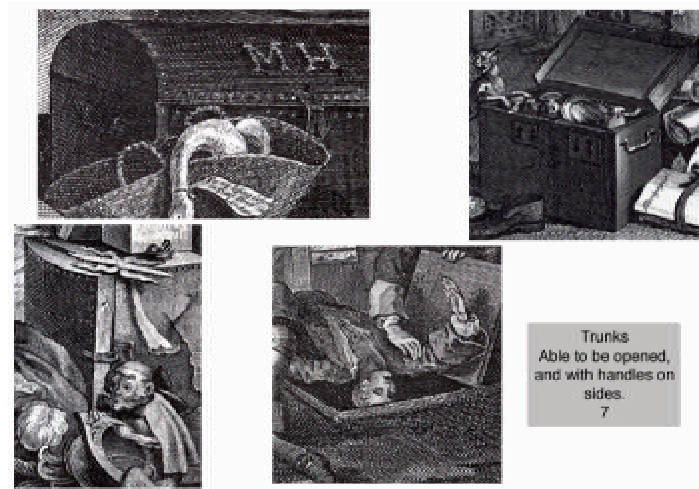


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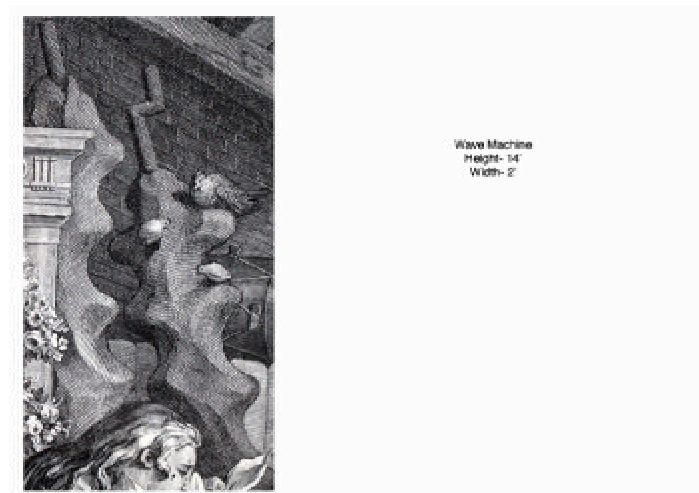


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Appendix B: Supporting Documents



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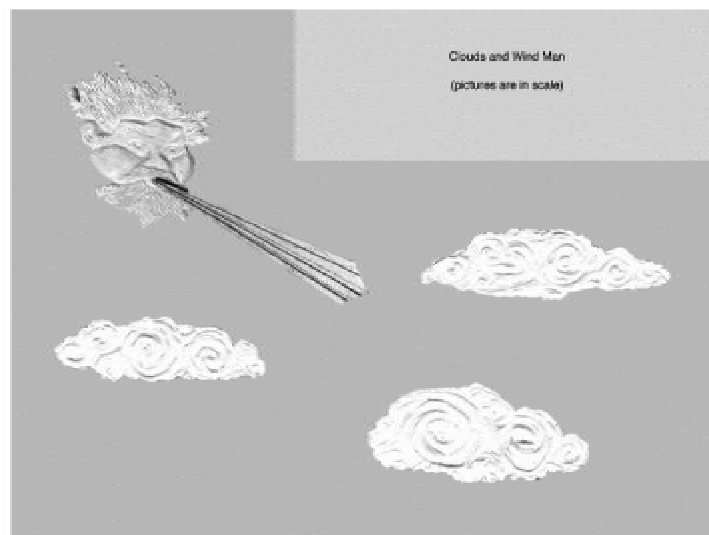


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Appendix B: Supporting Documents



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Appendix C: Production Photographs



Figure 17. Prologue

The Taming of the Shrew, University of Maryland at College Park
Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center
The Ina and Jack Kay Theatre
Opening: March 4, 2005
Photograph by: Andrew J. Guban

Appendix C: Production Photographs



Figure 18. Prologue

The Taming of the Shrew, University of Maryland at College Park
Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center
The Ina and Jack Kay Theatre
Opening: March 4, 2005
Photograph by: Andrew J. Guban

Appendix C: Production Photographs



Figure 19. Act I

The Taming of the Shrew, University of Maryland at College Park
Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center
The Ina and Jack Kay Theatre
Opening: March 4, 2005
Photograph by: Stan Barouh

Appendix C: Production Photographs



Figure 20. Act IV: Opening Look

The Taming of the Shrew, University of Maryland at College Park

Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center

The Ina and Jack Kay Theatre

Opening: March 4, 2005

Photograph by: Andrew J. Guban

Appendix C: Production Photographs



Figure 21. Act IV, Scene III: Base Look

The Taming of the Shrew, University of Maryland at College Park

Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center

The Ina and Jack Kay Theatre

Opening: March 4, 2005

Photograph by: Andrew J. Guban

Appendix C: Production Photographs



Figure 22. Act V, Scene 2

The Taming of the Shrew, University of Maryland at College Park
Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center
The Ina and Jack Kay Theatre
Opening: March 4, 2005
Photograph by: Andrew J. Guban

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